

AMENDMENTS TO the DRAWINGS:

Please replace Figs. 7, 8A, and 8B with the attached drawings marked "Replacement Sheet". In amended Figs. 7, 8A, and 8B, a legend of "PRIOR ART" has been added.

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed March 20, 2009 ("the Office Action"), the Examiner objected to the drawings because of informalities; objected to the title of the specification because of informalities; rejected claims 1-3 and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,974,662 of Eldridge et al. ("Eldridge"); rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eldridge in view of Japanese Patent No. 405218149 of ABE ("ABE"); and rejected claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eldridge in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,075,319 of Mori ("Mori").

In this Reply, claim 1 has been amended and claim 5 has been cancelled. Claims 1-4 and 6-9 are pending in the application, with claim 1 being the independent claim.

Formal Matters

With regard to the objection to the drawings, Applicant has amended the drawings as suggested by the Examiner. In particular, Applicant has amended Figs 7, 8A, and 8B to include the legend "PRIOR ART". Replacement sheets including these amended figures are attached to this Reply. Accordingly, Applicant requests the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, the Examiner suggested that the title of the invention is not descriptive. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner and submits that the title, as amended in the preliminary amendment of August 11, 2006, is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed. In particular, the claims are directed to

a "probe card" and the title of the application was previously amended to read "Probe Card". For this reason, Applicant requests reconsideration of the objection to the title of the application.

§ 102(b) Rejection of Claims 1-3 and 5-7

Regarding the rejection of claims 1-3 and 5-7, Applicant submits that claim 1 includes certain features which are not disclosed, taught, or otherwise suggested by Eldridge. For example, independent claim 1 recites a probe card comprising, among other things, a contactor; a circuit board; an intermediate member provided between the contactor and the circuit board; a coupling member integrating the contactor, the circuit board, and the intermediate member; a reinforcing member reinforcing the circuit board; and elastic members interposed between the contactor and the circuit board and between the circuit board and the reinforcing member respectively. At least these recited features are not disclosed by Eldridge.

In the Office Action, the Examiner maintains that Eldridge discloses the contactor, circuit board, reinforcing member, and elastic members of claim 1. In particular, the Examiner suggests that a space transformer (506), a probe card (502), a front mounting plate (534), and a spacer (544) of Eldridge constitute the contactor, circuit board, reinforcing member, and elastic members of claim 1, respectively. This is incorrect.

In contrast to claim 1, Eldridge discloses a single spacer (544) located on a side of the space transformer (506) opposite the probe card (502). That is, as can be seen in Fig. 5 and as described in column 25, lines 51-53 of Eldridge, the spacer (544) is not located between a contactor and a circuit board or between a circuit board and a

reinforcing member, as required by claim 1. The spacer (544) is located instead between the space transformer (506) and a mounting ring (540) that holds a wafer (508).

Further, even if the space transformer (506), the probe card (502), the front mounting plate (534), and the spacer (544) of Eldridge could be correctly considered to constitute the contactor, circuit board, reinforcing member, and elastic members of claim 1, a notion with which Applicant disagrees, Eldridge does not disclose a coupling member that integrates the contactor, the circuit board, and the intermediate member. Specifically, the only coupling member disclosed by Eldridge is a screw (542) that connects the mounting ring (540) to the front mounting plate (534). The screw (542) does not also connect to or otherwise integrate the circuit board, as required by claim 1.

Because Eldridge fails to disclose all of the elements of independent claim 1, the rejection of claim 1 is improper. Accordingly, Applicant requests the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3, 6, and 7 depend from claim 1. For at least the reason of their dependency on claim 1, dependent claims 2, 3, 6, and 7 should also now be allowed. Moreover, these dependent claims present further features of the invention and are patentable for these additional reasons as well.

For example, claim 7 recites, among other things, that the reinforcing member is disposed opposite the intermediate member across the circuit board. At least these additional recited features are not disclosed by Eldridge.

In the Office Action, the Examiner maintains that Eldridge discloses the spatial relationship recited in claim 7, but provides no support for this assertion. See Office Action, page 4. This assertion is incorrect.

In contrast to claim 7, Eldridge discloses that both the front mounting plate (534) and an interposer (504) (alleged by the Examiner to constitute the claimed intermediate member) are co-located on the same side of the probe card (502). See Fig. 5 of Eldridge. Because Eldridge fails to disclose the additional elements of claim 7, the rejection of claim 7 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 5 has been cancelled. Accordingly, the § 102(b) rejection of claim 5 is moot.

§ 103(a) Rejection of Claim 4

Applicant respectfully traverses the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claim 4 over Eldridge in view of ABE. Claim 4 depends from claim 1 and, as described above, Eldridge fails to disclose all of the elements of claim 1. In particular, Eldridge fails to disclose a coupling member integrating a contactor, a circuit board, and an intermediate member, or elastic members interposed between a contactor and a circuit board and between the circuit board and a reinforcing member. ABE, which was cited only for its alleged teaching of the use of a rubber conductive material, fails to remedy these deficiencies.

Because Eldridge and ABE, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the elements of dependent claim 4, the rejection of claim 4 is improper. Accordingly, Applicant requests the rejection of claim 4 be withdrawn.

§ 103(a) Rejection of Claims 8 and 9

Applicant respectfully traverses the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 8 and 9 over Eldridge in view of Mori. Claims 8 and 9 ultimately depend from claim 1 and, as described above, Eldridge fails to disclose a coupling member integrating a contactor, a circuit board, and an intermediate member, or elastic members interposed between a contactor and a circuit board and between the circuit board and a reinforcing member. Mori, which was cited only for its alleged teaching of a pressing member, fails to remedy these deficiencies.

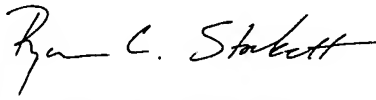
Because Eldridge and Mori, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the elements of dependent claims 8 and 9, the rejection of claims 8 and 9 is improper. Accordingly, Applicant requests the rejection of claims 8 and 9 be withdrawn.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Reply, please charge the fee to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 16, 2009

By: 
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Attachments: Replacement Sheets (2 pages)